

REST, REST

NO. 969

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 8, 1871,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
Matthew 11:28-30.*

WE have often repeated these memorable words, and they have brought us much comfort. But it is possible that we may never have looked deeply into them, so as to have seen the fullness of their meaning. The works of man will seldom bear close inspection. You shall take a needle which is highly polished, which appears to be without the slightest inequality upon its surface, and you shall put it under a microscope, and it will look like a rough bar of iron. But you shall select what you will from nature, the bark or the leaf of a tree, or the wing or the foot of an insect, and you shall discover no flaw, magnify it as much as you will, and gaze upon it as long as you please.

So take the words of man. The first time you hear them they will strike you. You may hear them again and still admire their sentiment, but you shall soon weary of their repetition, and call them hackneyed and over-estimated. The words of Jesus are not so. They never lose their dew, they never become threadbare. You may ring the changes upon His words and never exhaust their music. You may consider them by day and by night, but familiarity shall not breed contempt. You shall beat them in the mortar of contemplation, with the pestle of criticism, and their perfume shall but become the more apparent. Dissect, investigate, and weigh the Master's teaching word by word, and each syllable will repay you.

When loitering upon the Island of Liddo, off Venice, and listening to the sound of the city's bells, I thought the music charming as it floated across the lagoon, but when I returned to the city and sat down in the center of the music, in the very midst of all the bells, the sweetness changed to a horrible clash, the charming sounds were transformed into a maddening din. Not the slightest melody could I detect in any one bell, while harmony in the whole company of noisemakers was out of the question. Distance had lent enchantment to the sound.

The words of poets and eloquent writers may as a whole, and heard from afar, sound charmingly enough, but how few of them bear a near and minute investigation! Their belfry rings passably, but one would soon weary of each separate bell. It is never so with the divine words of Jesus. You hear them ringing from afar, and they are sweetness itself. When as a sinner you roamed at midnight like a traveler lost on the wilds, how sweetly did they call you home! But now you have reached the house of mercy, you sit and listen to each distinct note of love's perfect peal, and wonderingly feel that even angelic harps cannot excel it.

We will this morning, if we can, conduct you into the inner chambers of our text, place its words under the microscope, and peer into the recesses of each sentence. We only wish our microscope were of a greater magnifying power, and our ability to expound the text more complete, for there are mines of instruction here. Superficially read, this royal promise has cheered and encouraged tens of thousands, but there is a wealth in it which the diligent digger and miner shall alone discover. Its shallows are cool and refreshing for the lambs, but in its depths are pearls for which we hope to dive.

Our first head, this morning, is *rest*, “Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” The second head is *rest*, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls.”

I. Let us begin at the beginning with the first REST, and here we will make divisions only for the sake of bringing out the sense more clearly.

1. Observe *the person invited* to receive this first rest, “Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden.” The word “*all*” first demands attention, “*All* you that labor.” There was need for the insertion of that wide word. Had not the Savior said a little before, “I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to babes”?

Some who had been listening to the Savior might have said, “The Father, then, has determined to whom He will reveal the Christ. There is a number chosen, according to the Father’s good pleasure, to whom the Gospel is revealed, while from the rest it is hidden!” The too hasty inference, which it seems natural for man to draw from the doctrine is, “Then there is no invitation for me. There is no hope for me. I need not listen to the Gospel’s warnings and invitations.”

So the Savior, as if to answer that discouraging notion, words His invitation thus, “Come unto me, *all* you that labor and are heavy laden.” Let it not be supposed that election excludes any of you from the invitation of mercy. All of you who labor are bidden to come. Whatever the great doctrine of predestination may involve, rest assured that it by no means narrows or diminishes the extent of Gospel invitations. The good news is to be preached to “every creature” under heaven, and in this particular passage it is addressed to *all* the laboring and heavy laden.

The description of the person invited is very full. It describes him both actively and passively. “*All you that labor*”—there is the activity of men bearing the yoke and ready to labor after salvation. “*Heavy laden*”—there is the passive form of their religious condition, they sustain a burden, and are pressed down, and sorely wearied by the load they bear.

There are to be found many who are actively engaged in seeking salvation. They believe that if they obey the precepts of the law they will be saved, and they are endeavoring to the utmost to do them. They have been told that the performance of certain rites and ceremonies will also save them, they are performing those with great care. The yoke is on their shoulders, and they are laboring diligently. Some are laboring in prayer, some are laboring in sacraments, others in self-denials and mortifications, but as a class they are awakened to feel the need of salvation, and they are intensely laborious to save themselves. It is to these the Savior addresses His loving admonition. In effect He tells them, “This is not the way to rest, your self-imposed labors will end in disappointment. Cease your wearisome exertions and believe in Me, for I will at once give you rest—the rest which My labors have earned for believers.”

Very speedily those who are active in self-righteously working for salvation fall into the passive state and become burdened. Their labor of itself becomes a burden to them. Besides the burden of their self-righteous labor, there comes upon them the awful, tremendous, crushing burden of past sin, and a sense of the wrath of God which is due to that sin. A soul which has to bear the load of its own sin, and the load of divine wrath, is indeed heavy laden. Atlas with the world upon his back had a light load compared with a sinner upon whom mountains of sin and wrath are piled.

Such persons frequently are burdened, in addition, by fears and apprehensions. Some of them correct, others of them baseless, but anyhow the burden daily grows. Their active labors do not diminish their passive sufferings. The acute anguish of their souls will often be increased in proportion as their endeavors are increased, and while they hope at first that if they labor industriously they will gradually diminish the mass of their sin, it happens that their labor adds to their weariness beneath its pressure. They feel a weight of disappointment because their labor has not brought them rest, and a burden of despair because they fear that deliverance will never come. Now these are the persons whom the Savior

calls to Himself—those who are actively seeking salvation, those who are passively bearing the weight of sin and of divine wrath.

It is implied, too, that these are *undeserving* of rest, for it is said, “Come unto me, and I will *give* you rest.” A gift is not of merit but of grace. Wages and reward are for those who earn, but a gift is a matter of charity. O you who feel your unworthiness this morning, who have been seeking salvation earnestly, and suffering the weight of sin, Jesus will freely give to you what you cannot earn or purchase. He will give it as an act of His own free, rich, sovereign mercy, and He is prepared, if you come to Him, to give it to you now, for so has He promised, “Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

2. Notice next, *the precept here laid down*, “Come.” It is not “Learn,” it is not “Take my yoke”—that is in the next verse, and is intended for the next stage of experience—but in the beginning the word of the Lord is, “Come unto me,” “Come,” “Come.” A simple word, but very full of meaning. To come is to leave one thing, and to advance to another.

Come, then, you laboring and heavy laden, leave your legal labors, leave your self-reliant efforts, leave your sins, leave your presumptions, leave all in which you hitherto have trusted, and come to Jesus, that is, think of, advance towards, rely upon the Savior. Let your contemplations think of Him who bore the load of human sin upon the cross of Calvary, where He was made sin for us. Let your minds consider Him who from His cross hurled the enormous mass of His people’s transgressions into a bottomless sepulcher, where it was buried forever.

Think of Jesus, the divinely-appointed substitute and sacrifice for guilty man. Then, seeing that He is God’s own Son, let faith follow your contemplation. Rely upon Him, trust in Him as having suffered in your stead, look to Him for the payment of the debt which is due from you to the wrath of God. This is to come to Jesus. Repentance and faith make up this, “Come”—the repentance which leaves the place where you now stand, the faith which comes into reliance upon Jesus.

Observe that the command to “Come” is put in the present tense, and in the Greek it is intensely present. It might be rendered something like this, “Hither to me all you that labor and are heavy laden!” It is a “Come” which means not, “Come tomorrow or next year,” but “Now, at once.” Advance, you slaves, flee from your taskmaster now! Weary ones, recline on the promise now, and take your rest! Come now! By an act of instantaneous faith which will bring instantaneous peace, come and rely upon Jesus, and He will now give you rest. Rest shall at once follow the exercise of your faith. Perform that act of faith now. O may the eternal Spirit lead some laboring, heavy-laden soul to come to Jesus, and to come at this precise moment!

It is “Come unto *me*.” Notice that. The Christ in His personality is to be trusted. Not, “Come to John, and hear him say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,’” for no rest is there. John commands a preparation for the rest, but he has no rest to give to the soul. Come not to the Pharisees, who will instruct you in tradition, and in the jots and tittles of the law, but go past these to Jesus, the man, the God, the Mediator, the Redeemer, the propitiation for human guilt.

If you want rest come to Christ in Gethsemane, to Christ on Calvary, to Christ risen, to Christ ascended. If you want rest, O weary souls, you can find it nowhere until you come and lay your burdens down at His dear pierced feet, and find life in looking alone to Him. There is the precept then. Observe it is nothing but that one word, “Come.” It is not “Do.” It is not even “Learn.” It is not, “Take up my yoke,” that will follow after, but must never be forced out of its proper place. To obtain the first rest, the rest which is a matter of gift—all that is asked of you is that you come to have it.

Now, the least thing that charity itself can ask when it gives away its alms, is that men come for it. Come, you needy, come and welcome. Come and take the rest you need. Jesus says to you, “Come and take what I freely give.” Without money come, without merit come, without preparation come. It is just come, come now. Come as you are, come with your burden, come with your yoke, though the yoke be the yoke of the devil, and the burden be the burden of sin, yet come as you are, and the promise shall be fulfilled to you, “I will give you rest.”

3. Notice next *the promise spoken*, “I will give you rest.” “I will *give*.” It is a rest that is a gift. Not a rest found in our experience by degrees, but given at once. As I shall have to show you, the next verse speaks of the rest that is found, worked out, and discovered. But this is a rest given. We come to Jesus. We put out the empty hand of faith, and rest is given us at once most freely. We possess it at once, and it is ours forever.

It is a *present* rest, rest now. Not rest after death. Not rest after a time of probation and growth and advancement, but it is rest given when we come to Jesus, given there and then. And it is *perfect* rest too, for it is not said, nor is it implied, that the rest is incomplete. We do not read, “I will give you partial rest,” but “rest,” as much as if there were no other form of it. It is perfect and complete in itself. In the blood and righteousness of Jesus our peace is perfect.

I shall not stay except to ask you now, brethren and sisters, whether you know the meaning of this given rest. Have you come to Jesus, and has He given you perfect and present rest? If so, I know your eye will catch joyously those two little words, “*And I*,” and I would bid you lovingly remember *the promiser* who speaks. Jesus promises, and Jesus performs. Did not all your rest, when first your sin was forgiven, come from Him? The load was gone, but who took it? The yoke was removed, but who lifted it from off your shoulder? Do you not give to Jesus, this day, the glory of all your rest from the burden of guilt? Do you not praise His name with all your souls? Yes, I know you do.

And you know how that rest came to you. It was by His substitution, and your faith in that substitution. Your sin was not pardoned by a violation of divine justice. Justice was satisfied in Jesus. He gave you rest. The fact that He has made full atonement is the rest of your spirit this morning. I know that deep down in your consciences, the calm which blesses you springs from a belief in your Lord’s vicarious sacrifice. He bore the unrest that you might have the rest, and you receive rest this day as a free gift from Him.

You have done now with servile toils and hopeless burdens, you have entered into rest through believing. But all the rest and deliverance still comes to you as a gift from His dear hands, who purchased with a price this blessing for your souls. I earnestly wish that many who have never felt that rest would come and have it. It is all they have to do to obtain it—to come for it, just where they now are, if God enables them to exercise a simple act of faith in Jesus, He will give them rest from all their past sin, from all their efforts to save themselves, a rest which shall be to His glory and to their joy.

II. We must now advance to our second head—REST.

It looks rather strange that after having received rest, the next verse should begin, “Take my yoke upon you.” “Ah! I had been set free from laboring, am I to be a laborer again?” Yes, yes, take my yoke and begin. “And my *burden* is light.” “Burden? why, I was heavy laden just now, am I to carry another burden?” Yes. A yoke—actively, and a burden—passively. You are to bear both of these. “But I found rest by getting rid of my yoke and my burden!” And you are to find a further rest by wearing a new yoke, and bearing a new burden.

Your yoke galled, but Christ’s yoke is easy. Your burden was heavy, but Christ’s burden is light. Before we enter into this matter more fully, let us illustrate it. How certain it is that a yoke is essential to produce rest, and without it rest is unknown! Spain found rest by getting rid of that wretched monarch Isabella. An iron yoke was her dominion upon the nation’s neck, crushing every aspiration after progress by an intolerable tyranny. Up rose the nation, shook off its yoke, and threw aside its burden, and it had rest in a certain sense, rest *from* an evil. But Spain has not fully rested yet, and it seems that she will never find permanent rest till she has voluntarily taken up another yoke, and found for herself another burden.

In a word, she must have a strong, settled, recognized government, and then only will her distractions cease. This is just a picture of the human soul. It is under the dominion of Satan, it wears his awful yoke, and works for him. It bears his accursed burden, and groans under it. Jesus sets it free—but has it, therefore, a perfect rest? Yes, a rest *from*, but not a rest *in*. What is needed now is a new

government, the soul must have a sovereign, a ruling principle, a master-motive, and when Jesus has taken that position, rest is come. This further rest is what is spoken of in the second verse.

Let me give you another symbol. A little stream flowed through a manufacturing town. An unhappy little stream it was, for it was forced to turn huge wheels and heavy machinery, and it wound its miserable way through factories, where it was dyed black and blue, until it became a foul and filthy ditch, and loathed itself. It felt the tyranny which polluted its very existence.

Now, there came a deliverer who looked upon the stream and said, "I will set you free and give you rest." So he stopped up the water-course, and said, "Abide in your place, you shall no more flow where you are enslaved and defiled." In a very few days the brooklet found that it had but exchanged one evil for another. Its waters were stagnating, they were gathering into a great pool, and desiring to find a channel. It was in its very nature to flow on, and it foamed and swelled, and pressed against the dam which stayed it.

Every hour it grew more inwardly restless. It threatened to break the barrier, and it made all who saw its angry looks tremble for the mischief it would do ere long. It never found rest until it was permitted to pursue an active course along a channel which had been prepared for it among the meadows and the corn fields. Then, when it watered the plains and made glad the villages, it was a happy streamlet, perfectly at rest.

So our souls are made for activity, and when we are set free from the activities of our self-righteousness and the slavery of our sin, we must do something, and we shall never rest until we find that something to do. Hence in the text you will be pleased to see that there is something said about a yoke, which is the ensign of working, and something about a burden, which is the emblem of enduring. It is in man's mortal nature that he must do or endure, or else his spirit will stagnate and be far from rest.

1. We will consider this second rest, and notice that it is *rest after rest*. "I will give you rest" comes before, "You shall find rest." It is the rest of a man who is already at rest, the repose of a man who has received a *given* rest, and now *discovers* the found rest. It is the rest of a learner, "Learn of me, and you shall find rest." It is not so much the rest of one who was aforesaid laboring and heavy laden, as of one who is today learning at the Savior's feet.

It is the rest of a seeker evidently, for finding usually implies a search. Having been pardoned and saved, the saved man in the course of his experience discovers more and more reason for peace. He is learning, and seeking, and he finds. The rest is evidently lighted upon, however, as a thing unknown, which becomes the subject of discovery. The man had a rest *from* his burden, and now he finds a rest *in* Christ, which exceeds what he asked or even thought.

I have looked at this rest after rest as being a treasure concealed in a precious box. The Lord Jesus gives to His people a priceless case, called the gift of rest. It is set with brilliant stones and inlaid with gems, and the substance thereof is of wrought gold. Whosoever possesses it feels and knows that his warfare is accomplished and his sin is pardoned.

After a while the happy owner begins to examine his treasure. It is all his own, but he has not yet seen it all, for one day he detects a secret drawer. He touches a hidden spring, and lo! before him lies a priceless Koh-I-Noor surpassing all the rest. It had been given him it is certain, but he had not seen it at first, and therefore he *finds* it. Jesus Christ gives us, in the gift of Himself all the rest we can ever enjoy, even heaven's rest lies in Him. But after we have received Him we have to learn His value, and find out by the teaching of His Spirit the fullness of the rest which He bestows.

Now, I say to you who are saved, you who have looked to Jesus Christ, whether you looked this morning or twenty years ago, have you found out all that there is in the gift which Christ has given you? Have you discovered out the secret drawer yet? He has given you rest, but have you found the innermost rest which He works in your hearts? It is yours, for it is included in the one gift. But it is not yours enjoyed, understood, and triumphed in as yet unless you have found it, for the rest here meant is a rest after rest, a spiritual, experienced rest which comes only to those who find it by experience.

2. Further observe that the rest in this second part of our text is a *rest in service*. It is coupled with a yoke, for activity, “Take my yoke.” It is connected with a burden, for endurance, “My burden is light.” He who is a Christian will not find rest in being idle. There is no unrest greater than that of the sluggard. If you would rest, take Christ’s yoke and be actively engaged in His service. As the bullock has the yoke put upon its neck, and then begins to draw, so have the yoke of Christ put on your neck and commence to obey Him.

The rest of heaven is not the rest of sleep. They serve Him day and night in His temple. They are always resting, and yet in another sense, they rest not day nor night. Holy activity in heaven is perfect rest. True rest to the mind of the child of God is rest on the wing, rest in motion, rest in service, not rest with the yoke off, but with the yoke on. We are to enter upon this service voluntarily. We are to *take His yoke* upon us voluntarily.

You observe, it does not say, “Bear my yoke when it is laid upon you, but take it.” Do not need to be told by the minister, “My dear brother, such-and-such a work you are bound to do,” but take up the yoke of your own accord. Do not merely submit to be the Lord’s servant, but seek His service. Ask, “What can I do?” Be desirous to do it. Voluntarily, cheerfully, do all that lies in you for the extension of His kingdom who has given you rest, and you shall find that the rest of your soul shall lie in your doing all you can for Jesus.

Every active Christian will tell you he is never happier than when he has much to do, and on the whole, if he communes with Jesus, never more at rest than when he has least leisure. Look not for your rest in the mere enjoyments and excitements of religion, but find your rest in wearing a yoke which you love, and which, for that reason, is easy to your neck.

But my dear brother, you must also be willing to bear Christ’s burden. Now the burden of Christ is His cross, which every Christian must take up. Expect to be reproached, expect to meet with some degree of the scandal of the cross, for the offense of it never ceases. Persecution and reproach are a blessed burden. When your soul loves Jesus it is a light thing to suffer for Him, and therefore, never by any cowardly retirement or refusal to profess your faith, evade your share of this honorable load.

Woe unto those who say, “I will never be a martyr.” No rest is sweeter than the martyr’s rest. Woe unto those who say, “We will go to heaven by night along a secret road, and so avoid the shame of the cross.” The rest of the Christian is found not in cowardice, but in courage. It lies not in providing for ease but in the brave endurance of suffering for the truth. The restful spirit counts the reproach of Christ to be greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. He falls in love with the cross, and counts the burden light, and so he finds rest in service, and rest in suffering. Note that well.

3. The rest before us is *rest through learning*. Does a friend say, “I do not see how I am ever to get rest in working, and rest in suffering”? My dear brother, you never will except you go to school, and you must go to school to Christ. “Learn of me,” says He, “for I am meek and lowly in heart.” Now, in order to learn of Christ, it is implied that we lay aside all prejudices of the past. Those things much prevent our finding peace. Have you any preconceived notions of what religion should be? Have you fashioned on your own anvil ideas of what the doctrines of the Gospel ought to be? Throw them all away. Learn of Jesus, and unlearn your own thoughts.

Then, when you are willing to learn, please note what is to be learned. In order to get perfect rest of mind you have to learn of Jesus, not only the doctrines which He teaches, but a great deal more than that. To go to school to be orthodox is a good enough thing, but the orthodoxy which brings rest is an orthodoxy of the Spirit. Observe the text, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.” What? For I am wise and learned, and can teach you? No. You are to learn from His example to be “meek and lowly in heart,” and in learning that you will “find rest unto your souls.”

To catch the spirit of Jesus is the road to rest. To believe what He teaches me is something, to acknowledge Him as my religious leader and as my Lord is much, but to strive to be conformed to His character, not merely in its external developments, but in its interior spirit, this is the grammar of rest. Learn to be like the meek and lowly-hearted One, and you shall find rest.

He tells us the two points in which we are to learn of Him. First, He is *meek*, then He says He is *lowly in heart*. Take the word “meek” first. I think that refers to the yoke-bearing, the active labor. If I actively labor for Christ, I can only find rest in the labor by possessing the meek spirit of my Lord. For if I go forth to labor for Christ without a meek spirit, I shall very soon find that there is no rest in it, for the yoke will gall my shoulder. Somebody will begin objecting that I do not perform my work according to his liking. If I am not meek I shall find my proud spirit rising at once, and shall be for defending myself. I shall be irritated, or I shall be discouraged and inclined to do no more, because I am not appreciated as I should be.

A meek spirit is not apt to be angry, and does not soon take offense, therefore if others find fault, the meek spirit goes on working, and is not offended. It will not hear the sharp word, nor reply to the severe criticism. If the meek spirit is grieved by some cutting censure and suffers for a moment, it is always ready to forgive and blot out the past, and go on again. The meek spirit in working only seeks to do good to others. It denies itself. It never expected to be well treated. It did not aim at being honored. It never sought itself, but purposed only to do good to others. The meek spirit bowed its shoulder to the yoke, and expected to have to continue bowing in order to keep the yoke in the right place for labor. It did not look to be exalted by yoke-bearing. It is fully contented if it can exalt Christ and do good to His chosen ones.

Remember how meek and lowly Jesus was in all His service, and how calmly, therefore, He bore with those who opposed Him? The Samaritans would not receive Him, and therefore John, who felt the yoke a little galling to his unaccustomed shoulder, cried, “Master, call fire from heaven.” Poor John! But Christ bore the yoke of service so well because of His meek spirit that He would do nothing of the kind. If one village would not receive Him He passed on to another, and so labored on.

Your labor will become very easy if your spirits are very meek. It is the proud spirit that gets tired of doing good if it finds its labors not appreciated. But the brave, meek spirit, finds the yoke to be easy. “Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be weary and faint in your minds.” If you learn His meekness, His yoke will be pleasant to your shoulder, and you will never wish to have it removed.

Then, as to the passive part of our rest-lesson, note the text, “I am *lowly in heart*.” We shall all have to bear something for the truth’s sake so long as we are here. The reproach is a part of the Gospel. The rod is a blessing of the covenant. The lowly heart finds the burden very light because it acquiesces in the divine will. The lowly heart says, “Not my will, but Yours be done. Let God be glorified in me, it shall be all I ask. Rich, poor, sick, or in health, it is all the same to me. If God the great One has the glory, what matters where such a little one as I am may be placed?”

The lowly spirit does not seek after great things for itself, it learns in whatsoever state it is therewith to be content. If it is poor, “Never mind,” says the lowly one, “I never aspired to be rich. Among the great ones of this earth I never desired to shine.” If it is denied honor, the humble spirit says, “I never asked for earthly glory, I seek not my own honor but His that sent me. Why should I be honored, a poor worm like me? If nobody speaks a good word of me, if I get Christ to say, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant,’ that is enough.”

And if the lowly-hearted has little worldly pleasure, he says, “This is not my place for pleasure, I deserve eternal pain, and if I do not have pleasures here, I shall have them hereafter. I am well content to bide my time.” Our blessed Lord was always of that lowly spirit. He did not strive, nor cry, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets. The baubles of empire had no charm for Him. Had fame offered to sound her trumpet for none but Him, He would have cared not one whit for the offer. The kingdoms of this world and the glory thereof were offered Him, and He repelled the tempter. He was gentle, unobtrusive, self-denying, hence He treated His burden of poverty and shame as a light thing, “He endured the cross, despising the shame.” If we once learn Christ’s spirit we shall find rest unto our souls.

4. But we must pass on to notice that it is very evident that the rest which we are to find is *a rest which grows entirely out of our spirits being conformed to the Spirit of Christ*. “Learn of me, and you

shall find rest.” It is then a spiritual rest, altogether independent of circumstances. It is a vain idea of ours to suppose that if our circumstances were altered we should be more at rest. My brethren, if you cannot rest in poverty, neither would you in riches. If you cannot rest in the midst of persecution, neither would you in the midst of honor. It is the spirit within that gives the rest, that rest has little to do with anything without. Men have sat on thrones and have found them uneasy places, while others on the rack have declared that they were at rest. The spirit is the spring of rest, as for the outward surroundings they are of small account.

Let but your mind be like the mind of Christ, and you shall find rest unto your souls, a deep rest, a growing rest, a rest found out more and more, an abiding rest, not only which you have found, but which you shall go on to find. Justification gave you rest from the burden of sin, sanctification will give you rest from molesting cares, and in proportion as it becomes perfect, and you are like your Savior, your rest shall become more like that of heaven.

I desire one other thing to be called to your mind before I turn to the practical use of the text, and that is, that here as in the former rest, we are led to adore and admire the blessed person of our Lord. Observe the words, “*For I.*” Oh! it all comes from Him still, the second rest as much as the first, the case and the treasure in the secret drawer. It all hinges there, “*For I am.*”

In describing the second rest there is more said concerning Him than in the first. In the first part of our text it only says, “I will give you rest.” But in the second part His character is more fully explained, “For I am meek and lowly in heart,” as if to show that as believers grow in grace, and enjoy more rest, they see more of Jesus and know more of Him. All they know when sin is pardoned is that *He* gives it, perhaps they hardly know how, but afterwards when they come to rest in Him in sweet fellowship, they know more of His personal attributes, and their rest for that very reason becomes more deep and perfect.

Come we now to the practical use of all this. Read the chapter before us and find the clue. First, my dear brethren, if you find rest to your souls you will not be moved by the judgment of men. The children in the marketplace were the type of our Lord’s generation, who railed both at John the Baptist and at our Lord. The generation which now follows the same course, men are sure to cavil at our service. Never mind. Take Christ’s yoke on you, live to serve *Him*. Take Christ’s burden, make it a point to bear all things for His sake, and you will not be affected either by praise or censure, for you will find rest to your souls in surrendering yourself to the Father’s will.

If you learn of Jesus, you will have rest from the fear of men. I recollect, before I came to London, being at a prayer meeting where a very quaint brother prayed for me that I might be delivered from the “bleating of the sheep.” I understood it after a while, he meant that I might live above the fear of man, that when such a person said, “How much we have been edified today,” I might not be puffed up. Or if another said, “How dull the discourse was today,” I might not be depressed. You will be delivered from “the bleating of the sheep” when you have the spirit of the Good Shepherd.

Next you will be delivered from fretfulness at want of success. “Then he began to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not.” He had worked His mighty works, and preached the Gospel, and they did not repent. Was Jesus discouraged? Was He, as we sometimes are, ready to quit the work? No, His heart rested even then. If we come to Jesus, and take His yoke and burden, we too shall find rest, though Israel is not gathered.

Then, too, our Lord denounced judgments upon those who repented not. He told them that those who had heard the Gospel and rejected it would find it more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for them. There are some who quarrel with the judgments of God, and declare that they cannot bear to think of the condemnation of the impenitent. Is not this because they do not bear the burden of the Lord, but are self-willed?

The saints are described in the book of Revelation as singing, “Hallelujah,” while the smoke of Babylon goes up forever and ever. We shall never receive with humble faith the judgment of God in its terror until we take Christ’s yoke, and are lowly in heart. When we are like Jesus, we shall not feel that the punishment is too much for the sin, but we shall sympathize with the justice of God, and say

“Amen” to it. When the mind is lowly it never ventures to sit in judgment upon God, but rests in the conviction that the judge of all must do right. It is not even anxious to make apologies and smooth down the fact, for it feels “it is not mine to justify Him, He can justify Himself.”

So, again, with regard to the divine sovereignty. Notice the rest of the Savior’s mind upon that matter, “I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hid these things from the wise and prudent.” Learning of Jesus, we too shall rest in reference to divine decrees. We shall rejoice in whatever the Lord determines. Predestination will not cast a gloom over us, but we shall thank God for all He ordains.

What a blessed rest! As we open it up, does not its compass and depth surprise you? How sweet to lie passive in His hands, reconciled to every mystery, content with every dispensation, honored by every service satisfied in God!

Now, I do not know whether I am right, but it struck me, when considering this text from various points, that probably our Savior meant to convey an idea of deeper fellowship than we have yet considered. Did not He mean this—that He carried a yoke on His shoulder, which He calls, “*my yoke*”? When bullocks are yoked, there are generally two. I have watched them in Northern Italy, and noticed that when two are yoked together, and they are perfectly agreed, the yoke is always easy to both of them. If one were determined to lie down, and the other to stand up, the yoke would be very uncomfortable. But when they are both of one mind, you will see them look at each other with those large, lustrous, brown eyes of theirs so lovingly, and with a look they read each other’s minds, so that when one wants to lie down, down they go. Or when one wishes to go forward, forward they both go, keeping step. In this way the yoke is easy.

Now I think the Savior says to us, “I am bearing one end of the yoke on My shoulder. Come, My disciple, place your neck under the other side of it, and then learn of Me. Keep step with Me, be as I am, do as I do. I am meek and lowly in heart. Your heart must be like Mine, and then we will work together in blessed fellowship, and you will find that working with Me is a happy thing, for my yoke is easy unto me, and will be to you. Come then, true yoke-fellow, come and be yoked with Me. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me.”

If that is the meaning of the text, and perhaps it is, it invites us to a fellowship most near and honorable. If it is not the meaning of the text, it is, at any rate, a position to be sought after, to be laborers together with Christ, bearing the same yoke. Such be our lot. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON, MATTHEW 11.

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